



[4910-13-P]

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Federal Aviation Administration**

**14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2012-0427; Directorate Identifier 2011-NM-202-AD]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

**Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus Model A320-214 and-232 airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by reports that medium-head fasteners were installed in lieu of shear-head fasteners on a certain upper panel which manufacturer fatigue and damage tolerance analyses demonstrated could have an affect on panel fatigue life. This proposed AD would require repetitive inspections for cracking of certain fasteners, and repairs if necessary. We are proposing this AD to detect and correct cracking which could result in the loss of structural integrity of the airplane.

**DATES:** We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** You may send comments by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: (202) 493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this proposed AD, contact Airbus SAS-EAW (Airworthiness Office), 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; e-mail [account.airworth-eas@airbus.com](mailto:account.airworth-eas@airbus.com); Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may review copies of the referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, Washington. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

### **Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov>; or in person at the Docket Operations office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone (800) 647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer,

International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, Washington 98057-3356; telephone (425) 227-1405; fax (425) 227-1149.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **Comments Invited**

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposed AD. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2012-0427; Directorate Identifier 2011-NM-202-AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

### **Discussion**

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Community, has issued EASA Airworthiness Directive 2011-0176, dated September 13, 2011 (referred to after this as “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for the specified products. The MCAI states:

A problem was reported during the installation of upper panels on Frame 35 in Airbus A320 final assembly line.

Investigations revealed that medium head fasteners, Part Number (P/N) EN6114V3, were installed in lieu of shear head fasteners, P/N ASNA2657V3 and ASNA2043V3, which were previously used. Installation of these medium head fasteners leads to a deeper countersink in the panel. Fatigue and damage tolerance analyses were performed, the results of which demonstrated that this installation could have a fatigue impact on two rows of fasteners between stringers (STGR) 5 and 6, and indicated the need for a specific inspection in this area.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could impair the structural integrity of the affected aeroplanes.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires repetitive special detailed [high frequency eddy current] inspections [for cracking] of the affected fasteners and, depending on findings, the accomplishment of associated corrective actions [repair].

You may obtain further information by examining the MCAI in the AD docket.

#### **Relevant Service Information**

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320-53-1244, including Appendix 1, dated March 17, 2011. The actions described in this service information are intended to correct the unsafe condition identified in the MCAI.

#### **FAA's Determination and Requirements of This Proposed AD**

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

## **Costs of Compliance**

Based on the service information, we estimate that this proposed AD would affect about 44 products of U.S. registry. We also estimate that it would take about 3 work-hours per product to comply with the basic requirements of this proposed AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of the proposed AD on U.S. operators to be \$11,220, or \$255 per product.

We have received no definitive data that would enable us to provide cost estimates for the on-condition actions specified in this proposed AD. We have no way of determining the number of products that may need these actions.

## **Authority for This Rulemaking**

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in "Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

## **Regulatory Findings**

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

We prepared a regulatory evaluation of the estimated costs to comply with this proposed AD and placed it in the AD docket.

## **List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

## **The Proposed Amendment**

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

## **PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

**§ 39.13 [Amended]**

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new AD:

**Airbus:** Docket No. FAA-2012-0427; Directorate Identifier 2011-NM-202-AD.

**(a) Comments Due Date**

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**(b) Affected ADs**

None.

**(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to Airbus Model A320-214 and -232 airplanes; certificated in any category; manufacturer serial numbers 3456, 3503, 3516, 3529, 3591, 3597, 3611, 3631, 3696, 3698, 3714, 3719, 3775, 3777, 3780, 3782, 3786, 3797, 3805, 3812, 3870, 3907, 3909, 3913, 3922, 3929, 3946, 3953, 3975, 3979, 3991, 4010, 4012, 4014, 4027, 4034, 4043, 4046, 4064, 4065, 4084, 4093, 4094, and 4097.

**(d) Subject**

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53, Fuselage.

**(e) Reason**

This AD was prompted by reports that medium-head fasteners were installed in lieu of shear-head fasteners on a certain upper panel which manufacturer fatigue and damage tolerance analyses demonstrated could have an affect on panel fatigue life. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking which could result in the loss of

structural integrity of the airplane.

**(f) Compliance**

You are responsible for having the actions required by this AD performed within the compliance times specified, unless the actions have already been done.

**(g) Repetitive Inspection**

At the later of the times in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD: Do a high frequency eddy current inspection for cracking of the 2 rows of 6 fasteners at frame 35 between stringers 5 and 6 on the left and right sides, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1244, excluding Appendix 1, dated March 17, 2011. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 28,100 flight cycles or 56,300 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(1) Before the accumulation of 35,900 total flight cycles or 88,100 total flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(2) Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD.

**(h) Corrective Action**

If any crack is detected during any inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD: Before further flight, repair the crack using a method approved by either the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) or its delegated agent.

**(i) Other FAA AD Provisions**

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

**(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs):** The Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, has the authority to approve



AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Branch, send it to ATTN: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, Washington 98057-3356; telephone (425) 227-1405; fax (425) 227-1149. Information may be e-mailed to: [9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov](mailto:9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov). Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office. The AMOC approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

**(2) Airworthy Product:** For any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer or other source, use these actions if they are FAA-approved. Corrective actions are considered FAA-approved if they are approved by the State of Design Authority (or their delegated agent). You are required to assure the product is airworthy before it is returned to service.

**(j) Related Information**

Refer to MCAI EASA Airworthiness Directive 2011-0176, dated September 13, 2011; and Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1244, excluding Appendix 1, dated March 17, 2011; for related information.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 29, 2012.

Michael Kaszycki,  
Acting Manager,  
Transport Airplane Directorate,  
Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2012-11023 Filed 05/07/2012 at 8:45 am; Publication Date: 05/08/2012]